

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1140

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY

S E C R E T PONTA DELGADA 0163

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: FORAZ INFORMED OF IMMINENT FLA COUP ON TERCEIRA

1. FLA CONTACTED FORAZ POLITICAL AFFAIRS OFFICER TO INFORM HIM OF FLA PLAN FOR TAKEOVER AZORES IN NEAR FUTURE. TERCEIRA GROUP PLANS INITIAL SIMULTANEOUS SEIZURE OF POLICE, 17TH INFANTRY BATALLION, AIRBASE FOUR, AND USFORAZ ARMORIES USING SHOTGUNS AND SPORTING ARMS. WITH CAPTURED MILITARY WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT WOULD THEN TAKE CONTROL OF LAJES FIELD, PORT FACILITIES, AND ISLANDS SINGLE RADIO STATION. PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT WOULD THEN BE SET UP AND APPEAL FOR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION BROADCAST.

2. TERCIERA GROUP CLAIMS HAS COORDINATED PLANNING WITH FLA ON FAIAL, BUT THAT HAS ONLY INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH SAO MIGUEL FLA. COUP WILL BE ALUNCHED AS SOON AS CONCRETE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SYNCHRONIZATION OF ACTIVITIES CAN BE FINALIZED.
TERCEIRA FLA BELIEVES RESISTANCE TO COUP WILL BE MINIMAL SINCE MAJORITY TROOPS STATIONED IN AZORES ARE AZOREAN. THEY CONFIDENT THAT USG WILL SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL COUP BECAUSE OF INTEREST IN LAJES FIELD. THOUGH LAJES CONTACT NOTED THAT USG MIGHT INDIRECTLY AID COUP BY ALLOWING SEIZURE ARMORY, HE MADE NO REQUESTS FOR AID PRIOR TO THE COUP ITSELF. RATHER,

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HE CLAIMED, HE SIMPLY WISHED TO INFORM USG THAT COUP IMMINENT

SO THAT WILL BE PREPARED IN ADVANCE AND CAN MAKE DECISION ON
RECOGNITION WITH MINIMUM OF DELAY.

3. COMMENT: ON BASIS FORAZ CONTACT WITH FLA AND PARRIS/FRANCO CONVERSATION (REFTEL), WE INCREASINGLY INCLINED BELIEVE FLA IN ADVANCED STAGES OF PLANNING FOR FORCIBLE TAKEOVER OF ISLANDS. MAIN FLA WEAKNESS AT THIS TIME APPEARS BE LACK COORDINATION BETWEEN GROUPS ON VARIOUS ISLANDS. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS EFFORTS BEING MADE RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM. SEPERATISTS APPARENTLY ANXIOUS ACT ASAP TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN LISBON AND REDUCE POSSIBILITY OF DISCOVERY. COUP MAY, THEREFORE, OCCUR IN VERY NEAR FUTURE. WE FEEL SUCCESS OF COUP WILL DEPEND PRIMARILY ON WHETHER OR NOT IT INITIATED BY LOCAL ARMED FORCES. IF FLA, AN ESSENTIALLY UPPER CLASS GROUP, ATTEMPTS ACT ON OWN, LOCAL LEFT COULD BE EXPECTED RESIST AND MIGHT BE SUCCESSFUL IN RALLYING URBAN WORKERS TO OPPOSE COUP. IF FLA INITIATED COUP NOT IMMEDIATELY SUCCESFUL, MILITARY MIGHT WELL MOVE TO END.

PARRIS

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